

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 IO-13 ISO-00 CIAE-00 COME-00 EB-08

INR-10 LAB-04 NSAE-00 SIL-01 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

L-03 NSC-05 PA-01 SP-02 SS-15 USIA-06 HA-05 /102 W

-----074648 012211Z /65

R 311320Z MAR 78

FM AMCONSUL JOHANNESBURG

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 7487

INFO AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

AMCONSUL CAPE TOWN

AMCONSUL DURBAN POUCH

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY PRETORIA

USMISSION USUN NEW YORK

C O N F I D E N T I A L JOHANNESBURG 0839

CAPE TOWN ALSO FOR EMBASSY

E.O. 11652: GDS

TAGS: PLAB, SF, SHUM

SUBJECT: BLACK TRADE UNION RIGHTS: TUCSA CONFERENCE

REF: JOHANNESBURG 0751

1. SUMMARY: SOME OBSERVERS OF THE SOUTH AFRICAN LABOR SCENE BELIEVE MINISTER OF LABOR FANNIE BOTHA MAY DECLARE AT THE FORTHCOMING TUCSA CONFERENCE THE INTENTION OF THE SAG TO PERMIT THE REGISTRATION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS. THE EVENTUAL GRANTING OF BLACK TRADE UNION RIGHTS SHOULD BE EVALUATED, HOWEVER, IN THE CONTEXT OF OTHER DEVELOPMENTS IN THE SAG'S POLICY OF SEPARATE DEVELOPMENT. END SUMMARY.

2. SEVERAL SOURCES BELIEVE THE PURPOSE OF THE TRADE UNION COUNCIL OF SOUTH AFRICA'S (TUCSA) SPECIAL CONFERENCE SCHEDULED FOR NEXT WEEK MAY BE TO DECLARE THE INTENTION OF THE SOUTH  
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AFRICAN GOVERNMENT TO ALLOW THE REGISTRATION OF BLACK TRADE UNIONS. THIS VIEW IS HELD, FOR EXAMPLE, BY EVELYN SELORO (BLACK), GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE TRANSVAAL TEXTILE WORKERS UNION. SIMILARLY, EDDIE WEBSTER OF THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WITWATERSRAND, WHO HAS BEEN ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE BLACK TRADE UNION MOVEMENT FOR YEARS, BELIEVES THAT THE PRESENCE OF JOHN BARRETT OF THE S.A. INSTITUTE FOR INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS

ON THE PROGRAM (JOHANNESBURG 0751) IS AN INDICATION TUCSA MAY BE PROPOSING TO OPEN ITS DOORS WIDER TO BLACK UNIONS.

3. THE VRESENCE OF MINISTER OF LABOR FANNIE BOTHA ON THE PROGRAM IS ALSO SIGNIFICANT. THIS WILL BE THE FIRST TIME A NATIONALIST MINISTER HAS EVER ADDRESSED A TUCSA MEETING. ACCORDING TO PIET ROODT, GENERAL SECRETARY OF THE S.A. FOOTPLATE STAFF ASSOCIATION, BOTHA HAS RECENTLY BEEN TELLING GROUPS OF WHITE TRADE UNIONISTS THEY MUST REALIZE THAT CHANGE IS COMING AND BE PREPARED TO ACCEPT BLACK TRADE UNIONISTS WITHIN THEIR RANKS.

4. COMMENT: IF THESE RUMORS ARE SUBSTANTIATED, IT WOULD CONFIRM NIC WIEHAHN'S VIEW THAT THE BEST WAY TO NEUTRALIZE INTERNATIONAL TRADE UNION OPPOSITION TO SOUTH AFRICA IS TO ALLOW BLACKS TO BELONG TO REGISTERED TRADE UNIONS. IT WILL BE IMPORTANT TO OBSERVE, HOWEVER, WHETHER TRADE UNION RIGHTS ARE GRANTED TO ALL BLACKS WORKING IN SOUTH AFRICA OR ONLY TO THOSE WITH S.A. CITIZENSHIP AND PERMANENT RESIDENCE RIGHTS. IF THE LATTER IS THE CASE, THE EXPANSION OF TRADE UNION RIGHTS MAY BE A HOLLOW GESTURE SINCE, WITH THE INDEPENDENCE OF THE HOMELANDS, CITIZENSHIP AND PERMANENT RESIDENCE RIGHTS FOR MOST BLACK SOUTH AFRICANS ARE EXPECTED TO WITHER AWAY UNDER EXISTING LEGISLATION. A CASE IN POINT, SELORO, AN ETHNIC TSWANA WHO WAS BORN AND LIVED ALL HER LIFE IN JOHANNESBURG, WAS RECENTLY REFUSED RENEWAL OF HER SOUTH AFRICAN PASSPORT. SHE WAS TOLD SHE MUST OBTAIN A

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BOPHUTHATSWANA PASSPORT.

5. SUBSTANCE ABOVE MAY BE PASSED TO AFL-CIO AS MAY BE DESIRED. JOHNSON

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## Message Attributes

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Sheryl P. Walter  
Declassified/Released  
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